

Message Text

PAGE 01 NIAMEY 00619 101443 Z

53

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 AID-20 EB-11 NSC-10 RSC-01

CIEP-02 SAL-01 SS-14 STR-08 OMB-01 CEA-02 L-03 H-02

IO-13 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-02 INR-09 NSAE-00 TRSE-00

XMB-07 OPIC-12 LAB-06 SIL-01 IGA-02 PA-03 PRS-01

USIA-12 RSR-01 /188 W

----- 020995

R 101101 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5070

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

US MISSION EC BRUSSELS 85

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

LIMITED OFFICIAL NIAMEY 619

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PFOR, SG

SUBJECT: WEST AFRICAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION

1. WE USED OCCASION DUNCAN VISIT TO CALL ON HAROUNA BEMBELLO, NIGER MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION, AND OUMAROU SANI, DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY. BOTH HAD ATTENDED ECA MINISTERIAL AT ACCRA AND WERE WELL INFORMED ON SUBJECT ISSUE.

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PAGE 02 NIAMEY 00619 101443 Z

2. BEMBELLO REGRETTED THAT ACCRA MINISTERIAL HAD NOT DISCUSSED EC ASSOCIATION QUESTION. HE VIEWED AFRICAN DISCUSSION THIS MATTER

ESSENTIAL AND THAT ISSUE OF WHO SPONSOR MEETING SECONDARY. HE THOUGH ECA WOULD HAVE BEEN APPROPRIATE BODY AND THAT OAU EXSEC EKANGAKI ISOLATED FROM FACTS IN TALKING FROM POLITICAL TRIBUNE OF OAU. HE CONCURRED THAT NIGERIA AT ACCRA MANIFESTED SHIFT IN POLICY ON EC ASSOCIATION FROM ONE OF GLORIOUS ISOLATION TO CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION IN UNITED AFRICAN FRONT. HE STATED SENEGALESE POSITION ON REVERSE PREFERENCES WAS FROM " OLD SCHOOL " AND MUST CHANGE. IN VIEW NIGERIAN DECISION PARTICIPATE IN ECA/ OAU/ AFDE/ AACB MINISTERIAL AT ABIDJAN AND MORE FLEXIBLE EUROPEAN(GERMAN, DUTCH) ATTITUDE, BEMBELLO CONVINCED ACCEPTABLE POSITION CAN BE FOUND ON REVERSE PREFERENCES.

3. REFERRING TO CEAO, BEMBELLO SAID NIGER HAS NOT YET TAKEN POSITION ON HOLDING PROPOSED ABIDJAN MEETING IN MARCH QUITE APART FROM MATTER OF WHO WILL ATTEND. HE SAID HE TOLD CEAO ADMIN SEC TAMBOURA THAT MONETARY ISSUE WHICH NOT NOW INCLUDED IN DRAFT CEAO ACCORDS MUST BE DISCUSSED. NIGER PREPARED MEET ALONE WITH FRANCO- PHONES PROVIDED RELATIONS WITH ANGLOPHONES INCORPORATED IN AGREEMENT, NIGER POSITION IS THAT REALITIES PREVENT NIGER FROM PARTICIPATING IN TRADING SYSTEM WHICH DOES NOT TAKE ACCOUNT OF IMPORTANT DE FACTO TIES WITH NIGERIA AND GHANA WHICH PRECLUDE ANY IMPLEMENTATION OF EXCLUSIVE FRANCOPHONE ARRANGEMENT. CEAO WILL BE PRIMARILY OF INTEREST AND VALUE TO NIGER TO THE EXTENT THAT IT FACILITIATES ACHIEVING SATISFACTORY BILATERAL ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS WITH NIGERIA.

4. BEMBELLO CONFIRMED DIORI POSITION THAT PAYMENTS ARRANGEMENT SHOULD PROBABLY PRECEDE CEAO. HE VIEWED PAYMENTS SYSTEM WITH ANGLOPHONES AS CRUCIAL TO NIGER DEVELOPMENT POSSIBILITIES. ALTHOUGH NIGER MONETARY SITUATION MORE SATISFACTORY WITH RESPECT NIGERIA WHERE BOTH CURRENCIES FREELY CIRCULATE ACROSS BORDER, PAYMENTS WITH GHANA HAVE BEEN DELAYED UP TO 11 MONTHS WITH MERCHANTS' CAPITAL ON BOTH ENDS TIED UP IN BANKS.

5. SANI EXPRESSED SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT VIEWS FROM BEMBELLO. HE STRESSED LINKAGE OF FED AID TO COMMERCIAL PREFERENCES AND PERCEIVED LITTLE POSSIBILITY OF EC FLEXIBILITY ON THIS ISSUE. HE ARGUED ANGLOPHONES-- NOTABLY NIGERIA-- WERE ONLY INTERESTED IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 NIAMEY 00619 101443 Z

COMMERCIAL ASPECTS OF AYAOUNDE WHILE FRANCOPHONES WERE PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN INCREASING EC AID LEVELS. HE CONCLUDED THAT OAU/ ECA/ AFDB/ AACB ABIDJAN MINISTERIAL WOULD RESULT IN IMPASSE AND FELT ANGLOPHONES SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN YAOUNDE NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS IN HOPE UNITED AFRICAN FRONT MIGHT GET BETTER TERMS WITHOUT DISRUPTING RENEWAL ACCORD.

6. SANI PLACED GREAT WEIGHT ON RUSH OF NIGERIA SWALLOWING

UP NIGER IN ANY FREE TRADE ZONE AND FELT ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES SHOULD BE DEALT WITH IN FRAMEWORK OF BILATERAL COMMODITY AGREEMENTS. IN INTERESTING EXTENSION SAME ARGUMENT, SANI APPEARED OPPOSE NIGERIAN PARTICIPATION IN CEAO AS PRODUCING FREE TRADE ZONE BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES WHOSE RESULTS HE GREATLY FEARED.

7. UP TO THIS POINT, SANI GAVE IMPRESSION OF ECHOING GOF LINE BUT WHEN ASKED TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN OPPOSITION TO ECONOMIC INTEGRATION WITH NIGERIA AND APPARENT ACCEPTANCE OF SIMILAR INTEGRATION WITHIN CEAO FRANCOPHONE CONTEXT, HE APPEARED SHIFT TO ECONOMIC NATIONALISM APPROACH. HE CLAIMED CEAO ONLY OF INTEREST AS IT PROMOTED INDUSTRIALIZATION WITHIN NIGER. COMPENSATION PAYMENTS WERE NO SUBSTITUTE IF THEY COULD ONLY BE USED FOR PAYING UNEMPLOYED.

8. EMBASSY NIAMEY BELIEVES DIFFERENCE IN OUTLOOK BETWEEN BEMBELLO AND SANI LARGELY REFLECTS LATTER'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONCRETE TRADE AND INDUSTRIALIZATION MATTERS VS FORMER'S BROADER ECONOMIC POLICY OUTLOOK.

9. INTERESTINGLY, BEMBELLO DECLINED ANY SUBSTANTIVE COMMENT ON EMBASSY REFERENCE TO CONCURRENT VISIT TO NIAMEY OF EC COMMISSION DENIAU WHO ARRIVED VIA SPECIAL PLANE FROM DAKAR ON MARCH 9; AND SANI LIKEWISE MADE NO MENTION DENIAU VISIT.

10. COMMENT: WE SUSPECT FRENCH ARE ALARMED OVER UNEXPECTED POTENTIAL INTERJECTION OF NIGERIANS AND THEIR HARD LINE INTO RENEGOTIATION OF YAOUNDE II WHICH THEY PROBABLY HOPED TO KEEP MORE OR LESS WITHIN WELL-DEFINED CHANNELS OF PREVIOUS CONVENTION. THEY ARE NOW FACED WITH UNSETTLING PROSPECT OF ANGLOPHONE FOX IN MIDST OF FRANCOPHONE AFRICAN CHICKEN- YARD.
MCCLELLAND

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